HONITON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health,

For 1918.

May, 1919.

GENTLEMEN,

I have much pleasure in submitting my Annual Report for the year 1918.

In accordance with instructions received from the Local Government Board, this Report is rendered as briefly as possible, and deals only with the more essential matters.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The estimated Civilian Population of your District for 1918 is 8121, and this forms the basis for the calculation of the Death Rate. The Birth Rate is calculated on an estimated total Population of 9099.

BIRTH RATE.

The total number of Births registered during the year was 116, as against 131 during 1917. This is the lowest recorded number, but of course is quite in keeping with the general decline throughout the country owing to the war.

There were 59 Male and 57 Female Births registered, including seven illegitimate children. This is a very high per centage of Illegitimate Births.

The Birth Rate is 12.7 per 1000.

1916.	16.03	per	1000.
1917.	14.3	,,	,,
1918.	12.7	,,	,,

DEATHS.

The total number of Deaths registered during 1918 was 116, giving us a Death Rate of 14.2 per 1000, and includes 65 Males and 51 Females.

Death Rate.

1916.	13.3	per	1000.
1917.	15.7	per	1000.
1918.	14.2	per	1000.

Causes of Death.

	1918.	1917.
Influenza	14	6
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	5	10
Tuberculosis Meningitis	2	2
Cancer	12	8
Meningitis	1	0
Organic Heart Disease	17	20
Bronchitis	3	10
Pneumonia	13	6
Other Respiratory Diseases	4	3
Nephritis	1	5
Congenital Debility	3	2
Suicide	3 (violence)	4
Other Defined Diseases	37	53
Causes Unknown	1	—
Total	116	129

For comparison with other years, the number of Deaths due to Cancer and Pulmonary Tuberculosis may be tabulated as follows:—

	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.
Cancer	13	10	12	8	12
Tubercle of Lungs ...	5	9	4	10	5

Our Death Rate would have been remarkably low, if it had not been for the wave of Influenza and Pneumonia, which swept the whole country last October and November.

The majority of Deaths were amongst those in the prime of life between 20 and 35 years of age, and mostly amongst the working class (21 males and 6 females).

The cause for this very heavy mortality in not far to seek, judging from numerous cases which came under my own observation, and I am quite certain that had proper nursing and stimulants such as brandy been available, a large number of cases could have been saved, but in a large Rural District like this, it is next to impossibility to organize or supply proper nursing when such an epidemic is sweeping the country. Trained Nurses could not be obtained anywhere.

The chief danger in Influenza is neglect of the initial symptoms, such as a feverish cold, headache and sore throat. The labourer who depends on his daily work to support his family cannot afford to remain indoors for every cold he has, and then alas, not realizing the danger he is running, carries on, until he is absolutely forced to give up, and then oftimes too late, as Pneumonia intervenes. (During this epidemic practically all Schools were closed in the District.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

Only 4 Deaths were registered of Children under 1 year, and I am glad to say no deaths of illegitimate children occurred amongst the 4.

1916.	1917.	1918.
72.3	37.4	34.5 per 1000 Births.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Measles	18
Diphtheria	2
Erysipelas	1
Tetanus	1
	22

The above shows the number of cases of Infectious Disease notified during the year, and with the exception of Measles, the year has been a record in the absence of Infectious Diseases.

The two cases of Diphtheria were removed to the Isolation Hospital at Roncombe, which has once again demonstrated how valuable an Institution of this sort is to the health of the District. The two cases were both carriers, and required a prolonged course of treatment before they could be released.

I should like to draw the attention of the Council to the very excellent and efficient manner in which Mrs. Johnson has conducted the Isolation Hospital. It is always kept spotlessly clean, and all beds ready aired for occupation.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis	7 cases.
Non Pulmonary	4 cases.

Only 7 cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified during the year, as compared with 12 in 1917.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

The Maternity Work has been fairly satisfactory, but the shortage of trained and efficient Midwives is very serious.

I subjoin an abstract Report which I have received from Mr. A. J. Redfern on his work as Sanitary Inspector during the year.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
DUNCOMBE STEELE-PERKINS.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT, 1918.

HOUSING & TOWN PLANNING ACT, 1909.

No. of Houses visited (Sec. 17) ...	18
,, ,, dangerous and injurious ...	0
,, Representations to L.A. ...	0
,, Closing orders made	0
,, Notices under Sec. 15 ...	0
,, Remedied without closing orders	0
,, ,, with ,, ,,	0
,, Demolition orders made ...	0

Number and Nature of Inspections.

No. of Visits to Houses	141
,, ,, Cowsheds, &c. ...	48
,, ,, Slaughter-houses ...	20
,, ,, Bakehouses	11
,, ,, Schools	10
,, ,, Sewage Works ...	192

Results.

No. of Water supplies improved ...	6
,, Houses repaired and whitewashed	32
,, Drains repaired	20
,, Closets altered from Privies to Pails	6
,, Schools disinfected	1

Notices Served.

No. of Statutory Notices	0
,, Informal Notices (by letter) ...	20
,, ,, ,, (verbal) ...	51
,, Interviews with owners or agents	21

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Rural District Council.

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR 1918.

DIMOND
PRINTER, HONITON.